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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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SUBJECT: ELECTIONS SNAPSHOTS #5

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[1](#)B. 06 ABUJA 3216
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THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET
DISTRIBUTION.

[1](#)1. (SBU) This cable is the fifth in a series of elections
snapshots designed to provide a sense of the local
environment in the run up to the elections planned for April
[1](#)2007. In-depth information will continue to be reported in
septels, with the snapshot format being used to convey
interesting and pertinent anecdotes or facts. Post welcomes
any comments or suggestions.

THE CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS

[1](#)2. (SBU) This Day newspaper published an opinion poll on
March 11 indicating Yar'Adua is the presidential
front-runner. According to the results, Yar'Adua is likely
to make a "strong showing" in almost all the 36 states,
securing the constitutionally required twenty five percent of
votes case in over 30 states on the first ballot. With
regard to gubernatorial races, the poll predicts, if
elections were held today, PDP would win outrightly in 16 of
the 36 states, including: Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa,
Delta, Ogun, Oyo, Anambra, Osun, Kebbi, Kwara, Kogi, Niger,
Bauchi, Gombe, and Kaduna. Polling data shows the
gubernatorial race will be close in Abia, Enugu, Imo, Edo,
Ebonyi, Ondo, Ekiti, Nassarawa, Benue, Adamawa, Taraba, and
Katsina states -- with AC and/or ANPP candidates threatening
to overtake PDP. According to the poll, the PDP, which
remains solidly in control of the south-south zones, may
manage to wrestle control from the ANPP in the North-West
states of Kebbi, Jigawa and Sokoto states.

[1](#)3. (SBU) COMMENT: A senior member of This Day's editorial
board told Polcouns on March 23 that his publisher had
received "millions" from the Presidency to print data
designed to look like polling data. He claims no poll had
been undertaken by the newspaper. END COMMENT.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The 24 presidential candidates and their running
mates are scheduled to participate in a four-day presidential
debate beginning April 1. The debates are organized by the

Nigerian Elections Debate Group, the National Broadcasting Commission, the National Orientation Agency, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the UN Development Programme. At present, Vice President Atiku is not scheduled to appear in the debates as he is not on the INEC candidates list.

ELECTION PREPARATIONS -----

15. (SBU) Leadership newspaper published a photograph on its front page March 22 of what it claims is an INEC polling station supplies bag and its contents. The paper allegedly obtained the sample of the supplies (which INEC will send to each polling station) from an INEC contact. The supply bag is stamped with the INEC logo and includes blue Papermate "Erasermate" pens (erasable ball points). According the the newspaper report, INEC will instruct polling officials to remove the pen caps, which clearly have an eraser, when placing the pens at the voting stations. (COMMENT: With the caps removed, the pens appear to be plain blue ballpoint stick pens. Few Nigerians are familiar with erasable pens so the Erasermate name on the pen would not raise suspicion among most voters. END COMMENT.)

15. (SBU) Of Interest: Nigeria has never had a president with a college degree. A win by Yar'Adua or Atiku (or a few of the lesser-known candidates) would be the first by a college graduate.
CAMPBELL